

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Replacement formal drawings of Figures 1-30 are submitted concurrently herewith under a separate cover letter.

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-40 are cancelled, and claims 41-49 are added. Thus, claims 41-49 are active in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested.

The specification and abstract have been carefully reviewed and revised in order to correct grammatical and idiomatic errors in order to aid the Examiner in further consideration of the application. The amendments to the specification and abstract are incorporated in the attached substitute specification and abstract. No new matter has been added.

Also attached hereto is a marked-up version of the substitute specification and abstract illustrating the changes made to the original specification and abstract.

Replacement formal drawings of Figures 1-30 are submitted concurrently herewith under a separate cover letter in order to correct a labeling error in Figure 19. Figure 19 is a block diagram illustrating an automatic contour extracting unit 220 according to an example modification of the ultrasonic diagnostic devices of the first and second embodiments of the present invention. As described in lines 29-32 on page 36 of the original specification, the automatic contour extracting unit 220 includes an information storing unit 226. The information storing unit 226 is described in lines 1-2 on page 38 of the original specification as storing criterion information.

However, the information storing unit 226 of the automatic contour extracting unit 220 is illustrated in Figure 19 as an information selecting unit 226. Accordingly, Figure 19 has been revised to denote the information storing unit as an “information storage unit” 226 instead of an information selecting unit 226. Approval of the replacement formal drawings is respectfully requested.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for kindly indicating, in item 38 on page 23 of the Office Action, that claims 18, 22, 24 and 26-28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim any intervening claim.

New claim 41 includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claims 1, 12, 14 and 18. New claim 42 depends from new claim 41 and recites that the object for contour extraction is “a left ventricle of a heart.” This additional limitation was recited in cancelled claims 13 and 14, for example.

New claim 43 includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claims 1, 12 and 22. New claim 44 includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claims 1, 25 and 26. New claim 45 depends from new claim 43 and includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claim 27. New claim 46 depends from new claim 44 and includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claim 28. New claim 47 includes the limitations originally recited in cancelled claims 1, 23 and 24.

New claim 48 recites limitations similar to those recited in new claim 41, except that new claim 48 is directed to an image processing device, similar to cancelled claim 37.

New claim 49 is directed to a program for causing a computer to execute operations similar to the limitations recited in new claim 41. New claim 49 has also been drafted so as to recite patentable subject matter under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

It is noted that new independent claim 41 does not include all of the intervening dependent claims of cancelled claim 18. Specifically, new claim 41 does not include the limitations originally recited in cancelled claims 13 and 15-17.

Nevertheless, the Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 41 is clearly patentable over the applied references because none of the applied references, either individually or in combination, disclose or suggest the limitations originally recited in cancelled claim 18, which are included in new claim 41. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 41, as well as new claim 42 which depends therefrom, are clearly allowable over the applied references.

As mentioned above, new claims 48 and 49 recite limitations similar to those recited in new claim 41, except that new claim 48 is directed to an image processing device and new claim 49 is directed to a program for causing a computer to execute operations similar to the limitations recited in new claim 41.

The Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 48 and 49 are also clearly allowable over the applied references since none of the applied references, either individually or in combination, disclose or suggest the limitations originally recited in cancelled claim 18, which have been incorporated in new claims 47 and 48.

In view of the Examiner's assertion that claims 22, 24 and 26-28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base

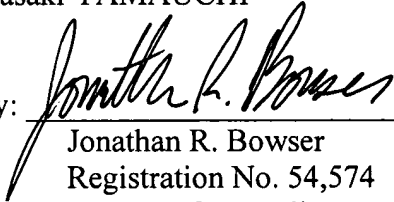
claim any intervening claim, the Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 43-44 and 47, as well as new claims 45-46 which depend therefrom, are clearly in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. An early notice thereof is respectfully solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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